

Reply to Office Action dated March 2, 2006

REMARKS

Claims 7-18 and 21-31 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 7, 21, and 27 are amended. No new matter is added. Support for the claims can be found throughout the specification, including the original claims and the drawings. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is thanked for the courtesies extended to Applicants' representative at the August 4, 2006 personal interview. The points discussed are incorporated herein.

The Examiner is further thanked for the indication that claims 8-18 are allowed.

The Office Action rejected claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner stated that Applicants' "limitation of 'configured to adjust a space between the upper tub cover and the lower tub cover' is considered new matter," and further that "[t]his broad 'configured to' language reads on various structures not disclosed or supported by Applicant[s]' original disclosure." As discussed at the personal interview, the Examiner is directed, for example, to the embodiment of the invention shown in Figures 7-8 and the corresponding disclosure in paragraphs 44-46. In particular, the Examiner is directed, for example, to paragraph 45, lines 12-15, which state that "[i]n order to couple the upper tub cover 201 to the lower tub cover 203, it is preferable that the height adjustment member 222 have a female thread 223, and the upper surface portion 222 of the upper tub corner 201 has a plurality

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of fastening holes 212 formed at portions corresponding to the height adjustment members 222.” The Examiner is further directed, for example, to paragraph 46, lines 7-9, which state that “a pressure of the washing water sprayed to the inner tub 103 from the tub cover 200 is adjustable by adjusting a space S between the upper tub cover and the lower tub cover, i.e., a height of the height adjustment member 222.” Thus, as indicated at the personal interview, the specification and drawings clearly provide support for the recited language. Accordingly, the rejection should be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejected claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particular point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed at the personal interview, the Examiner is again directed to paragraph 46, lines 7-9, which state that “a pressure of the washing water sprayed to the inner tub 103 from the tub cover 200 is adjustable by adjusting a space S between the upper tub cover and the lower tub cover, i.e., a height of the height adjustment member 222.” Accordingly, the rejection should be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejected claims 7, and 21-31 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Kohsaka, U.S. Patent No. 4,584,732, and under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee et al. (hereinafter "Lee"), U.S. Patent No. 5,509,283. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

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As discussed at the personal interview, independent claim 7 has been amended to recite, *inter alia*, a lower tub cover positioned under the upper tub cover spaced therefrom and fastened to the upper tub cover by at least one height adjusting member configured to adjust a space between the upper tub cover and the lower tub cover, thereby forming washing water passages that are adjustable by adjusting the space between the upper tub cover and the lower tub cover; independent claim 21 has been amended to recite, *inter alia*, a lower tub cover in the form of a substantially annular ring; and independent claim 27 has been amended to recite, *inter alia*, a lower cover in the form of a substantially annular ring. As agreed at the personal interview, both Kohsaka and Lee fail to disclose or suggest all of the features of independent claims 7, 21, and 27, or the respective claimed combinations.

Accordingly, the rejections of independent claims 7, 21, and 27 over Kohsaka and Lee should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 22-26 and 28-31 are allowable over Kohsaka and Lee for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to independent claims 21 and 27, from which they respectively depend, as well as for their additional features.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this,

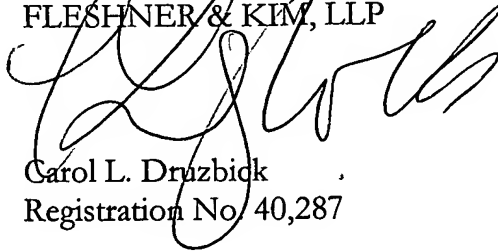
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concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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